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Letter dated 14 October 2010 from the Permanent Representatives of Brazil and Norway to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

On 22 September 2010, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Norway, Thailand, Senegal and Indonesia, the Minister of Health of South Africa and the Director for Global Public Goods at the Directorate-General for Globalization, Development and Partnerships of France met in New York, on the margins of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, to take stock of the achievements of the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative and to look at the way ahead. As the current Co-Chairs of the Initiative, we have the honour to transmit herewith the Ministerial Declaration adopted at that meeting (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 124.

(*Signed*) Maria Luiza Ribeiro **Viotti**
Permanent Representative of Brazil
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Morten **Wetland**
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Annex to the letter dated 14 October 2010 from the Permanent Representatives of Brazil and Norway to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

"Foreign Policy and Global Health — Responding to New Challenges and Setting Priorities for the Future: The Oslo Ministerial Declaration Three Years Later and Beyond"

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, France, Indonesia, Norway, Senegal, South Africa and Thailand, founding members of the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative, met in New York on 22 September 2010, on the margins of the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, to review progress, renew commitments and focus the agenda going forward. The seven Ministers issued the following statement:

In the 2007 Oslo Ministerial Declaration, we called for more attention to health as a foreign policy issue and for a stronger strategic focus on the international agenda.

Together with the United Nations Secretary-General and the World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General, our Initiative has contributed to the setting of a global foreign policy and global health agenda, anchored in annual General Assembly debates and resolutions.[a] The growing interest and engagement of countries, as well as the increasing academic work related to the interface between foreign policy and global health, underline the relevance of this agenda.

The commitments, views and concerns which brought us together are even more valid and relevant today. Despite some progress made, challenges in global health, including major inequities and vulnerabilities among countries and regions, still remain and demand persistent attention. Making globalization work for all is our shared challenge and responsibility.

The most effective response to pressing global health issues depends on cooperation and partnerships. More determination and action is needed, as well as concerted, strategic and coherent efforts to achieve health goals. Foreign policy areas such as security and peacebuilding, humanitarian response, social and economic development, human rights and trade have a strong bearing on health outcomes. We will continue to maintain preparedness for dialogue and action across the broader agenda as opportunities arise.

In renewing our commitment to the 2007 Oslo Ministerial Declaration and moving forward, together we will give particular attention to the following selected policy areas:

Millennium Development Goals

Failure to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) would pose a threat to peace and security, development and human rights, which are the pillars of the United Nations system. The achievements of any State in the promotion and protection of health are of value to all. We must translate

[a] Resolutions 63/33 and 64/108.

political commitment into concrete deeds. Together, we will engage in policy dialogue and identify specific obstacles and solutions in achieving the health-related MDGs. We will have a special focus on HIV, women and children, as well as on neglected diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, with a human-rights-based approach. We welcome the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health.

The achievement of the MDGs by 2015 will require political will at all levels, national ownership and leadership, and additional financial resources, as well as adequate, predictable and regular flows of official development assistance. Innovative financing mechanisms also make an important contribution in this respect. International cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, has a significant role to play in these endeavours. Together, we will explore alternative ways and means to promote a sustainable and structural impact on health and development in an interested third country, on the basis of shared best practices and lessons learned within our group.

We commit ourselves to promote universal health coverage in the multilateral agenda as a means to guarantee the equal right of every human being to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

We reiterate our willingness to seek universal access to medicines that are affordable, safe, effective and of good quality, as well as fairer access to vaccines in situations of pandemics. We also reiterate our commitment to pursuing innovative sources of financing for research and development on neglected diseases.

Global governance for health

Global governance for health is increasingly being challenged by the new realities of an interdependent world. On the one hand, there is a need to simplify the global health architecture and make it more effective, efficient and responsive. On the other, there is a need to give more attention to the interface between health governance and governance in traditional foreign policy domains. Together, we will make global governance for health outcomes the overarching and cross-cutting theme for our initiative. As Foreign Ministers, we will give particular attention to relevant multilateral processes with high impact on health. We will join efforts to enhance the visibility and awareness of health impact in these fora. We will engage with other interested parties in moving forward a global governance for health fit for purpose.

Imbalances in the global health workforce market

We note with concern the persistent lack of skilled health workers, as well as their uneven distribution within countries and throughout the world, in particular the shortage in sub-Saharan Africa, and welcome the adoption by the sixty-third session of the World Health Assembly of the Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel.

We welcome the Second Global Forum on Human Resources for Health, which will take place during the Prince Mahidol Award Conference 2011 in Bangkok.

Together, we will explore potential solutions as well as actions in the foreign policy domain that support the implementation of the Code. Information and communications technology has an important contribution to make in this respect.

Protecting people's health in situations of crisis

In emergency situations and during conflicts, essential State functions needed to protect public health and ensure access to essential health care are challenged. Access to and protection of/for health personnel during emergencies are also critical. Mobilizing resources for health is a cornerstone of rapid response and early recovery. Protecting and promoting health in ways that enhance citizen involvement is a contribution to recovery, democratization, trust and confidence in the future. Together, we will focus on opportunities and obstacles in terms of health protection and health recovery in ongoing reviews of the global humanitarian and peacebuilding systems and processes.

Establishing the evidence base

Through an analytical study, we will work together to establish better evidence about policy impact in the interface between health and selected traditional foreign policy disciplines, in order to contribute to strengthening preparedness, informing negotiations and demonstrating results.

WHO Conference on Social Determinants of Health

We welcome the convening of the World Health Organization Conference on Social Determinants of Health in Brazil in 2011. Together, we will engage in the discussions and contribute to its successful outcome.

We take note with appreciation of Brazil's offer to host our next meeting, which is scheduled to take place at the end of 2010.

New York, 22 September 2010